

What are Green Building Rating Systems?

Green building rating systems use a scoring system designed to evaluate new and remodeled buildings against a selected standard for environmental performance.

Sustainable design guidelines are a way to include environmental issues on the design, construction and operation of new and renovated buildings. These guidelines typically contain strategies or solutions for sustainable design.

Green building strategies are most effective when they are integrated from the very beginning of a project, but the resources listed below can be useful at any point in the building process.

BUILDING RATING SYSTEMS - COMMERCIAL & INSTITUTIONAL

INTERNATIONAL RATING SYSTEMS

BEPAC

Building Environmental Performance Assessment Criteria (BEPAC)

Link to <http://www.bepac.dmu.ac.uk/>

Canada's BEPAC (Building Environmental Performance Assessment Criteria) program is Canada's first comprehensive process for measuring the environmental performance of existing and new commercial buildings. It was created as a way to determine a building's impact on the global, local, and indoor environments. Modeled after the United Kingdom's BREEAM, this voluntary program was developed at the University of British Columbia in December 1993, and other regions across Canada have developed similar programs since then.

BREEAM

Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM)

link to <http://www.breemcanada.ca/>

BREEAM is a widely used international method of assessing building quality and performance in terms of energy efficiency, environmental impact, health and operation and management. BREEAM has been used worldwide on more than 900 buildings, making it the most widely used international method for assessing buildings.

NATIONAL RATING SYSTEMS

LEED™ (link to www.leedbuilding.org)

The LEED Green Building Rating System™ is a priority program of the US Green Building Council. It is a voluntary, consensus-based, market-driven building rating system based on existing proven technology. It evaluates environmental performance from a "whole building" perspective over a building's life cycle, providing a definitive standard for what constitutes a "green building".

LEED™ is based on accepted energy and environmental principles and strikes a balance between known effective practices and emerging concepts. Unlike other rating systems currently in existence, the development of LEED Green Building Rating System™ was instigated by the US Green Council Membership, representing all segments of the building industry. and has been open to public scrutiny.

LEED™ is a self-assessing system designed for rating new and existing commercial, institutional, and high-rise residential buildings. It is a feature-oriented system where credits are earned for satisfying each criteria. Different levels of green building certification are awarded based on the total credits earned. The system is designed to be comprehensive in scope, yet simple in operation.

There are two systems currently available:

LEED Version 2.1 for new construction or major renovations

LEED Existing Buildings for new buildings

Information on other systems currently under development are available at the LEED web site.

REGIONAL RATING SYSTEMS

MINNESOTA SUSTAINABLE DESIGN GUIDE

<http://www.msdc.umn.edu/default.htm>

The Minnesota Sustainable Design Guide is a design tool that can be used to overlay environmental issues on the design, construction, and operation of both new and renovated facilities. It can be used to set sustainable design priorities and goals; develop appropriate sustainable design strategies for a particular project; and to determine performance measures to guide the design and decision-making process.

The Minnesota Sustainable Design Guide provides approximately 50 strategies that are organized according to six environmental design topics--site, water, energy, indoor environment, materials, and waste. Each topic contains a series of design strategies that address the related sustainable design issues. In addition, each strategy has performance indicators, which set the minimum efforts (or benchmarks) that must be met in order to obtain credit for the strategy.

The **Iowa Sustainable Design Initiative** is testing the LEED Green Building Rating System™. The partners in the Iowa Sustainable Design Initiative evaluated other rating systems, but concluded that LEED was the most appropriate for the Iowa Initiative for the following reasons:

- The system is a nationally-recognized program
- The system is being adopted by a number of other cities, states, companies, organizations and agencies
- The system supports the Capital Complex sustainable design guidelines
- The system has no potential to be removed from the market place
- Other LEED guidelines will continue to be developed to meet the needs of other building types such as residential and tenant fit-out